ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system and method controls access to hardware and software functions by employing a codified electronic license that does not generally require application code modification. In response to customer purchases, highly configurable XML licenses 5 containing lists of allowable CLI commands are generated, digitally signed, and transmitted to various customer systems over a network. The customer systems authenticate the licenses, extract the CLI command lists, and register the specified commands with a command processor internal to the customers' systems. Only registered commands are allowed to execute, preventing unlicensed hardware and 10 software from operating on the system.